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INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4518

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AUG 26

1. [ ] MADE FOLLOWING POINTS IN QUAUGST 26 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF:

(A) [ ] AUGUST 25 RECEIVED [ ] THAT BUDDHIST INSTITUTE LEADERS ARE BACKING AWAY FROM THEIR CALL FOR BOYCOTT OF ELECTIONS. REALIZING THAT THEIR STAND AGAINST ELECTIONS PUTS THEM IN POSITION OF HELPING VIET CONG AND AWARE THAT THEY WILL GET VERY LITTLE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [ ] DATE [ ]
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

RESPONSE FROM PEOPLE, THEY ARE NOW PUTTING OUT WORD THAT THEY ARE NOT RPT NOT URGING PEOPLE NOT TO VOTE. HOWEVER THEY DO URGE PEOPLE TO VOTE AGAINST GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES. [ ] THAT TO BE FULLY EFFECTIVE THIS CANGE IN INSTITUTE POSITION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE PUBLIC.

(B) [ ] THAT 50 TO 60 PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTERS WILL TURN OUT ON ELECTION DAY. HE OBSERVED THAT IN MANY PLACES LOCAL AUTHORITIES WILL "OF COURSE" USE VARIOUS KINDS OF PRESSURES TO GET OUT VOTE.

(C) [ ] THAT THE DIRECTORATE HAS DECIDED IT WILL RELEASE OR TRY POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD SINCE 1963, INCLUDING BOTH CAN LAO AND CURRENT BUDDHIST STRUGGLERS.

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HOWEVER THIS IS DECISION "IN PRINCIPLE" AND NO RPT NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN UNTIL AFTER ELECTION. EMBOFF OBSERVED THAT IT WOULD HAVE VERY GOOD EFFECT ON BOTH VIETNAMESE AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION IF AT LEAST A BEGINNING COULD BE MADE BEFORE ELECTION. THIS WAS [ ] POSITION IN DIRECTORATE MEETING AND HE HOPES THAT ANNOUNCEMENT AT LEAST WILL BE MADE

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BEFORE ELECTION. [ ] WILL AKE UP MATTER WITH GENERAL THIEU MONDAY.

(D) [ ] HE FAVORS CONSTITUTION ON DEGAULLE MODEL, WITH STRONG PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER SELECTED BY PRESIDENT. HE SAID PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE APPROVED BY LEGISLATURE AND COULD ONLY BE REMOVED BY TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF LEGISLATURE. HE IS ALSO THINKING IN TERMS OF TWO CHAMBER LEGISLATURE WITH UPPER HOUSE HAVING ONE-THIRD TO ONE-HALF OF ITS SEATS RESERVED FOR MILITARY. MILITARY WOULD FILL ITS RESERVED SEATS BY SPECIAL ELECTION WITH ONLY MILITARY VOTING. [ ] THAT IMPORTANT THING IS TO FOLD MILITARY INTO NEW GOVERNMENT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID COUPS. HE SAID THAT GENERAL THIEU IS ALSO PREOCCUPIED WITH THIS PROBLEM. ASKED IF ABOVE IDEAS REPRESENT THINKING IN DIRECTORATE, [ ] THAT THESE IDEAS ARE HIS OWN. BUT HE HAS DISCUSSED THEM IN DIRECTORATE MEETINGS. HE SAID THIEU IS CONSIDERING HIS PROPOSAL OF RESERVED SEATS IN SENATE FOR MILITARY. [ ] SAID HE

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WILL LIKELY BE CHOSEN BY DIRECTORATE TO DEFEND ITS VIEWS ON CONSTITUTION BEFORE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

(E) [ ] THAT DIRECTORATE HAS NOT RPT NOT MADE UP ITS MIND WHETHER OR NOT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION SHOULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO FIRST LEGISLATURE. HE SAID THIEU'S IDEA IS TO WAIT AND SEE HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS. [ ] THINKS GVN GOVERNMENT SHOULD ORGANIZE ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT UNDER NEW CONSITUTION AND, IF POSSIBLE, AVOID STILL ANOTHER ELECTION FOR NEW ASSEMPLY BY TURNING CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION INTO FIRST LEGISLATURE.

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(F) [ ] HE HAS HEARD GREAT DEAL OF CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF CHANGE IT MADE IN ELECTORAL LAW PERMITTING GVN TO AMEND OR ADD TO CONSTITUTION. ONLY TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF CONVENTION CAN OVERRIDE SUCH SVN PROPOSALS, AND MANY PEOPLE VIEW THIS AS AMOUNTING TO MANDATE FOR GVN TO WRITE ANY SORT OF CONSTITUTION IT WISHES.

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(G) ASKED IF HE BELIEVES ANY OF THE GENERALS WILL RUN FOR PRESDIENT, HE THINKS THIEU WILL RUN. HE SAID HE IS ALMOST CERTAIN KY WILL NOT RPT NOT BE A CANDIDATE.

2. COMMENT (A) BY [ ]OWN ACCOUNT, CIVILIAN MEMBERS OF DIRECTORATE ARE USUALLY OUTVOTED BY UNITED MILITARY, AND CIVILIAN MEMBERS ARE OFTEN ON OUTSIDE LOOKING IN DESPITE THEIR FORMAL POSITION, HENCE VIEWS ON FORM OF CONSTITUTION SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS NECESSARILY REPRESENTING THOUGHT OF MILITARY MEMBERS OF DIRECTORATE. OF ALL THE CIVILIAN MEMBERS OF THE DIRECTORATE, HOWEVER, IS PROBABLY CLOSEST TO THE MILITARY. MOREOVER MADE IT CLEAR THAT MILITARY MEMBERS DIRECTORATE ARE CONCERNED WITH NEED TO GIVE MILITARY A FORMAL ROLE WHICH WILL TIE IT TO CONSTITUTUIONAL PROCEDURES AND DISCOURAGE COUPS. THIS CERTAINLY ONE OF KEY PROBLEMS WHICH CONVENTION MUST TRY TO SOLVE.

(B) WE ARE DOUBTFUL THAT [ ] CHANGE IN POSITION BY BUDDHIST INSTITUTE IS ACCURATE.

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NOTE: Passed S/S-O, White House, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA at 8:20 AM, 8/26/66

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